

Closing Gitmo endangers our U.S. national security, and it is a bad idea. And that is just the way it is.

□ 1745

#### SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES NOMINATION PROCESS

(Mr. ROTHFUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, when our Founders wrote the Constitution, they had the wisdom to create a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government. They knew this would limit power, protect against abuses, and promote liberty.

Under our Constitution, the President has the right to nominate Justices to the Supreme Court, but one House of the Congress, the Senate, has the coequal right to consent to such an appointment. One branch has a power, another has a check.

Today, with a vacancy on the Supreme Court, we have a chance to see this system of checks and balances in action. In deciding whether to consent to an appointment to the Supreme Court, the Senate should assess whether the President has been acting consistent with the Constitution.

The chart to my left highlights just a few of President Obama's unconstitutional actions since he was reelected in 2012. These actions have been frequent, repeated, and grave. These actions have poisoned the well of deliberation for any appointment by this President.

In that light, why wouldn't the Senate withhold consent? It is a game the President chose to play, and withholding consent to his appointment is an appropriate consequence.

#### GUANTANAMO BAY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, once again, Congress acted to stop the transfer of GTMO detainees to the United States. Guantanamo Bay is a much better venue to hold these known terrorists than to have them on American soil. Yet the President wants to defy Congress and the American people, who desire not to have this happen, and bring them onto American soil.

It endangers our courts, our system of government, and our people by bringing them here or even ultimately releasing them. We need to have the President, if he tries this and loses in court, once again, take a lesson in the final 10 months of his term that he needs to uphold the law that we passed and that he signed.

#### THE TEXAS WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AGAINST MEXICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALLEN). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is March 2, 2016. 180 years ago, on March 2, 1836, in a little place called Washington-on-the-Brazos down in Texas, people of what is now Texas declared their independence from the nation of Mexico—March 2, 1836. Tonight I am here to talk a little bit about those folks 180 years ago and the cause and the result of the Texas War of Independence against Mexico.

We have to back up a little bit. For a long time, almost 300 years, what is now Texas was controlled by the Spanish. They claimed the land in Texas. It was sparsely populated: some Indian tribes, but not very many folks. At some point, Spain also controlled what is now Mexico.

Mexico, the nation of Mexico, chose to declare independence from that European country of Spain and went to war with Spain to secure their independence back in 1820. That revolution—they called it the War of Independence—was successful. Mexico set up an independent nation, a democracy. They formed a government and a constitution very similar to the United States. Texas was a part of Mexico at that time and was part of a state called Coahuila. It was the Coahuila de Texas, two areas of northern Mexico that were one state in Mexico.

Things were fine until Mexico elected a President by the name of Santa Anna. When he became President of Mexico, this particular President abolished the democracy, abolished the constitution of 1824 that set up the Government of Mexico, and declared himself the dictator of Mexico. In fact, he destroyed the Republic of Mexico, the democracy of Mexico, and put himself as dictator-in-charge.

Throughout the history of the world, we know of a lot of dictators, but they all seem to have one thing in common: they take away the rights—the civil rights—of the people.

Some people in Mexico didn't like this, and therefore they started their own secession movement, their own revolution, their own independence. Now, most Americans know that Texas was one of those areas in Mexico that declared its independence from Mexico, and that independence, that revolution, was successful. But there were other areas of northern Mexico—and here on this map I have some of those areas—that also declared their independence for the reason they wanted to be free. They wanted independence from the dictatorship.

There was the Republic of the Yucatan, there was the Republic Coahuila, and there were three or four other republics, and the Republic of the Rio Grande. Several areas of population in Mexico declared their independence.

So what happened? Santa Anna not only was the dictator, but he was the commander in chief, and he was the

general. He was the guy. He moved his army from Mexico City into these areas of revolution, areas where people were fighting against the government, the republic, or the dictatorship of Santa Anna. He had squelched, really, all of these revolutionary movements; although, portions of these areas did declare independence and appeared to have independence for a period of time.

So that brings us to 1835, several months before Texas declared independence. Here is what started the Texas War of Independence:

While all of these other movements—some were going on, some would go on a few months later. But during this period, there was insurrection in northern Mexico because people were trying to seek independence. It started on October 2, 1835, at Gonzales, Texas, a small little community in Gonzales, Texas.

Remember, Texas is a part of Mexico at this time. The Mexican Government, when it was a free government, had encouraged immigration into this part of Texas—not just from the United States, but from Mexico and from European countries.

But this town of Gonzales, Texas, was in possession of a cannon. The cannon was to protect themselves from the people who lived in the area that were hostiles, as they were called in those days. Native Americans are who they were. And that cannon was for that purpose.

The Mexican Government said: We want the cannon back. You cannot have the cannon in Gonzales, Texas. We don't want you having it.

The Mexican Government made the demand on October 2 to the folks in Gonzales, Texas: Return the cannon to the Mexican military.

The people, the settlers of Gonzales, said: No. We are not going to do it. We are not giving you back the cannon. We need it.

So they resisted. They even made a flag. They called it the Come and Take It flag. You may have seen that recently. It is still popular with a lot of folks. It was a flag that said, "Come and take it," with a cannon on it. They hoisted this, and they had a skirmish with the Mexican Army, who came to take the cannon. Shots were fired on both sides, multiple shots. Apparently, most of the people shooting weren't great marksmen. A couple of Mexican soldiers were wounded, and they retreated without the cannon. But that event started the actual shooting war in the War of Independence.

Months before that, there had been complaints. There had been letters written to the Mexican Government. Stephen F. Austin, the Father of Texas, had been imprisoned in Mexico City trying to get some civil rights for people who lived in what is now Texas. But it all came to a head at this event in October of 1835.

It is interesting what started the Texas War of Independence, the shooting war, is very similar to what started